

our men and women in uniform, along with continuing the benefits that they and their families rely on.

As Senator MCCAIN, the chairman of the committee put it, not only does this legislation “[build] upon the sweeping reforms that Congress has passed in recent years” but “[b]y continuing important efforts to reorganize the Department of Defense, spur innovation in defense technology, and improve defense acquisitions and business operations, the NDAA seeks to strengthen accountability and streamline the process of getting our warfighters the equipment, training, and resources they need to succeed.”

Senator REED, the top Democrat on that committee, said that the NDAA “invests in much needed readiness to allow our fighting men and women to be properly trained and equipped for a wide range of threats.”

“I salute Chairman MCCAIN’s leadership,” Senator REED added, “in maintaining the Committee’s tradition of bipartisan cooperation and support of our Armed Forces.”

Let me echo that sentiment. This good bill has already earned the bipartisan support of every single member of the Armed Services Committee—every single member, Democrat and Republican. They reported it out unanimously. I appreciate the committee’s work on this year’s Defense authorization bill, as well as the ceaseless efforts of Chairman MCCAIN and Ranking Member REED. With their continued leadership and a little hard work from both sides, we can pass the Defense authorization bill this week.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 2810, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 175, H.R. 2810, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was 1 week ago when President Trump and Attorney General Sessions announced that they were going to rescind the DACA Program. This is a program created by President Obama by Executive order that allowed those who had come to the United States as children to have an opportunity to be given 2 years on a renewable basis where they would not be subject to deportation and could work.

These young people are known as the Dreamers, a term that came about when I introduced the bill 16 years ago called the DREAM Act. These are young people who, frankly, are just asking for a chance, an opportunity to be part of the only country they have ever known.

The laws of the United States are very tough and very strict, and they say that, if you are undocumented, in their situation, you have to leave America for 10 years and then petition to come back in. That is why I introduced the DREAM Act. So these young people who were brought to this country by their parents would have a chance.

President Obama used his authority in an Executive order to allow them to apply for DACA protection. They had to pay a substantial filing fee and submit themselves to a criminal background check before they would be allowed to stay. So 780,000 young people did just that, and they are protected currently, but only for a few more months, under this DACA provision.

What is going to happen to them, we don’t know. The only thing that makes any sense at this point is for Congress to act, for us to do something to replace the DACA Program, which the President is going to rescind, with a law—a law that establishes clearly the requirements, as well as the rights, that will be given to these individuals under the law.

That is why I have introduced the Dream Act with my cosponsor LINDSEY GRAHAM, a Republican of South Carolina. There are three other Republican cosponsors at this point, and we hope to move this forward.

President Trump has said he is interested in working with us, and we are going to take him at his word. Despite rescinding DACA, I hope the President will be on our side to come up with a replacement that is fair.

Also, I want to address many of the myths that have come up about DACA, as well as the Dream Act. I am going to quote an unusual source for this Senator. The source is a man named David Bier. David is an immigration policy analyst at the Cato Institute. Those of

us who live in this Washington environment of politics know that the Cato Institute is not a liberal think tank. It is the opposite. It is a conservative, largely Republican think tank, and Mr. Bier has published an article that has been seen in the Washington Post, in the Chicago Tribune, and in other papers entitled the “Five myths about DACA.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Washington Post article entitled “Five myths about DACA.”

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 7, 2017]

FIVE MYTHS ABOUT DACA

(By David Bier)

The Trump administration’s move to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, has created an uncertain future for the 800,000 young unauthorized immigrants who had been granted protection from deportation and permission to work legally. A six-month delay provides a chance for Congress to save the 2012 program. But if we’re going to debate the merits of DACA, we should know what we’re talking about. Here are some common myths.

MYTH NO. 1

DACA incentivized an increase in illegal immigration. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) is among those who support ending DACA because it has “encouraged more illegal immigration and contributed to the surge of unaccompanied minors and families seeking to enter the U.S. illegally.” Statements like this betray a misunderstanding of who is eligible for deportation relief under the program. DACA applies only to immigrants who entered before their 16th birthdays and who have lived in the country continuously since at least June 15, 2007—more than a decade ago. No one entering now can apply.

Perhaps the chairman thinks that children coming to the border are confused on this point. But the facts don’t support that view either. To begin with, the timing is wrong. According to data from the Border Patrol, the increase in migrant children in 2012—the year President Barack Obama announced DACA—occurred entirely in the months before the president announced the policy. The rate of increase also remained the same in 2013 as it was in 2012. Even then, the total number of juveniles attempting to cross the border—unaccompanied and otherwise—never returned to the pre-recession levels of the mid-2000s.

Another problem with the theory is that although the majority of DACA beneficiaries are of Mexican origin, the increase in children crossing the border stems from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. These countries share one common trait: much higher than average levels of violence than anywhere else in North America. A careful study of this phenomenon by economist Michael Clemens found that more than anything else, a rise in homicides between 2007 and 2009 set off a chain of events that led to the rise of child migration.

Regardless, overall illegal immigration is far below where it was before the United States’ last legalization program, in 1986, when each border agent caught more than 40 border crossers per month. Last year, it was fewer than two per month. DACA had no effect on this trend.

MYTH NO. 2

DACA has taken jobs from Americans. In announcing the Trump administration’s decision this past week, Attorney General Jeff

Sessions said that DACA “denied jobs to hundreds of thousands of Americans by allowing those same jobs to go to illegal aliens.” This myth even has a name in economics: the lump of labor fallacy. It supposes that the number of jobs in the economy is fixed, and that any increase in workers results in unemployment. Yet this notion is easily disproved. From 1970 to 2017, the U.S. labor force doubled. Rather than ending up with a 50 percent unemployment rate, U.S. employment doubled.

If adding workers made the economy poorer, we might expect that people would try to “free” themselves from competition by moving to a desolate mountain and making everything for themselves. That no one does so is an admission that competition is actually good. We depend on other workers, DACA recipients included, to buy the products and services we produce. That’s one reason earlier efforts to restrict immigration did not produce any wage gains.

MYTH NO. 3

Repealing DACA would benefit taxpayers. Sessions also argued that ending DACA “protects taxpayers.” But the opposite is true. According to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), first-generation immigrants who enter the United States as children (including all DACA recipients) pay, on average, more in taxes over their lifetimes than they receive in benefits, regardless of their education level. DACA recipients end up contributing more than the average, because they are not eligible for any federal means-tested welfare: cash assistance, food stamps, Medicaid, health-care tax credits or anything else.

They also are better educated than the average immigrant. Applicants must have at least a high school degree to enter the program. An additional 36 percent of DACA recipients who are older than 25 have a bachelor’s degree, and an additional 32 percent are pursuing a bachelor’s degree. The NAS finds that among recent immigrants who entered as children, those with a high school degree are positive to the government, to the tune of \$60,000 to \$153,000 in net present value, meaning it’s like each immigrant cutting a check for that amount at the door. For those with a bachelor’s degree, it’s a net positive of \$160,000 to \$316,000. Each DACA permit canceled is like burning tens of thousands of dollars in Washington.

MYTH NO. 4

DACA repeal protects communities from criminals. DACA repeal, the attorney general further claimed, “saves lives” and “protects communities.” He implied that DACA “put our nation at risk of crime.” But DACA participants are not criminals. Unauthorized immigrants—the applicant pool for DACA—are much less likely to end up in prison, indicating lower levels of criminality. More important, to participate in DACA, applicants must pass a background check. They have to live here without committing a serious offense. If they are arrested, DACA can be taken away even without a conviction.

Only 2,139 out of almost 800,000 DACA recipients have lost their permits because of criminal or public safety concerns—that’s just a quarter of 1 percent. Four times as many U.S.-born Americans are in prison. About 35 times as many Americans have ended up behind bars at some point before age 34.

MYTH NO. 5

DACA repeal is just about politics. Obama criticized the DACA move this past week as “a political decision” that was “not required legally.” But legal issues certainly factored into the Trump administration’s calculation. The timing coincided with a deadline that

several states imposed on the administration, stating that if the president did not wind down DACA by Sept. 5, they would sue. If President Trump wanted to end DACA for political reasons, he could have done so on his first day in office.

Obama should know that defending DACA legally could be difficult. After all, when he attempted to implement a similar but much broader program in 2015 for undocumented parents of U.S. citizens, courts shut him down. Obama implemented DACA without going through Congress, and although some legal scholars dispute whether it faces the same legal issues as the 2015 program, the Trump administration would have confronted a real possibility of defeat had it chosen to defend DACA in court.

The correct response, however—for economic reasons and security reasons, but above all for moral reasons—would have been to actively push for Congress to enact the program, not to announce its demise and leave the chips to fall where they may.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in this article, he spells out in some detail why some of the myths that were perpetrated by Attorney General Sessions and others last week need to be explained. One of them is that DACA somehow incentivized an increase in illegal immigration. Mr. Bier makes it clear that, when it comes down to it, you cannot arrive in the United States today and expect to be protected by DACA tomorrow. In fact, you have to have arrived in the United States at least by June 15 of 2007, more than a decade ago. So to argue that DACA was an incentive for more immigration in this country is just plain wrong.

What about those kids who showed up on the borders years ago, thousands of them? Well, it turns out that they weren’t eligible for DACA or the Dream Act, and it also turns out that most of them were not from Mexico but from parts of Central America, which has been devastated by crime waves and gang activity.

The second myth that Mr. Bier addresses is that these DACA recipients—780,000—are taking jobs away from Americans. What he points out is that, if you start with the premise that we have a static amount of jobs in this country—what he calls a “lump of labor fallacy”—then, it is dog-eat-dog to fight for those jobs.

It turns out that we have an expanding economy, and he proves it by giving us a statistic. Between 1970 and 2017, the U.S. labor force doubled. So rather than ending up with a 50-percent unemployment rate, our U.S. employment doubled. It is an expanding and dynamic economy.

The case can be made effectively that the DACA recipients are people who can add to the economy. All of them have to have the equivalent or a high school education. Many of them—large percentages of them—have college degrees and even more. So they can bring a lot to the economy.

The other point or the other myth that Mr. Bier addresses is whether repealing DACA would benefit taxpayers. The point he makes is that these DACA recipients are paying taxes in the jobs

they are working and, by and large, are ineligible for any Federal programs or any Federal assistance.

So they are a net gain in terms of our Treasury and in terms of what they can do. For example, if you are protected by DACA today on a 2-year renewable basis, you do not qualify for a Pell grant to go to college. You don’t qualify for a Federal Government loan. You have to find out how you are going to do it some other way. So these young people who are working and paying taxes are not drawing from any of the government programs that other people their age draw from.

There is also this argument that DACA somehow is going to make America less safe and that there will be more criminals. Don’t forget what I said earlier. To qualify for DACA, you have to submit yourself to a criminal background check. The likelihood of the next crime being committed by a DACA recipient is very narrow. The likelihood that it is committed by someone who is already an American citizen is much more likely.

Finally, there is the argument that DACA is just about politics. Well, it can be about politics, unless we do our job in Congress. We are supposed to pass the laws. The President has challenged us to pass a law that will help deal with DACA. We have, I think, an awesome responsibility to do just that.

I was at Loyola University’s medical school on Friday and met several of the DACA students who are in medical school at Loyola. They are extraordinarily bright individuals who competed and were accepted at Loyola’s medical school. Now they have a program. As they complete the 4 years of medical school at Loyola, they want to apply for residencies so they can specialize. If you are going to be a resident, you had better be prepared to work. If you don’t have DACA protection, you can’t legally work in the United States. Thirty-two aspiring, really bright, young medical students soon to be doctors will be stopped in their tracks if we don’t replace DACA because they cannot apply for residency because they cannot legally work in America without DACA protection or something like it.

Would we be better off in America if those 32 individuals did not become doctors? Of course not. We want them to become doctors. In Illinois, the State is helping to pay for their education with the promise that they will practice medicine in an underserved area of our State. I am from downstate Illinois, small-town Illinois, and I will tell you that we desperately need more doctors, not just in individual towns but at the hospitals that serve those towns. If these 32 can help us reach those goals, we are going to have better medical care across our State, but that depends on Congress and Congress meeting its responsibility.

I have come to the floor of the Senate over 100 times now to tell the stories of individuals who are affected by

DACA and the Dream Act, and I want to do that again today. I found that speeches are great and statistics are fine, but when you hear the stories about these individuals—who they are, what they have done, and what they aspire to do—you can understand the context of this important national debate.

The person I want to introduce today in the Senate is this young lady, Cristina Velasquez. She was brought to the United States at the age of 6 from Caracas, Venezuela. She went to elementary school in Madison, WI. She wrote me a letter. Cristina wrote the following:

I spent my formative childhood years in the Midwest where I learned to assimilate and learned the values this country was founded on. The salt-of-the-Earth quality of people around me and extraordinary kindness between strangers shaped my own values and attitude toward others. Growing up in Madison taught me a great deal about compassion, patience, and hard work.

Cristina was an outstanding student. In high school she was a member of the National Honor Society. She was elected vice president of her class, and she managed the track team. She found time to volunteer at a local summer camp for pre-K students. She graduated from the Honors College at Miami Dade College. She is currently a student at Georgetown University, majoring in international law, institutions, and ethics. She has received the President's Volunteer Service Award 2 years in a row and is a Walsh Scholar. As a graduate of Georgetown, I can tell you nobody ever named me a Walsh Scholar. This young lady obviously is very talented.

During her time at Georgetown, Cristina has interned in the House of Representatives and has piloted a college mentorship program at a local high school. In addition, she also has found time to have two part-time jobs. She has to. You see, as a person who is protected by DACA and undocumented, she doesn't qualify for government assistance to go to college—certainly not at the Federal level. So these students have to work extra hard to stay in school.

She has dedicated two of her undergraduate summers and a full school year volunteering to teach in Miami and in San Francisco. In both of these cities, she worked with high-achieving, low-income students trying to get them into college. You see, Cristina's dream ultimately is to be a teacher.

Last week in my office, Cristina joined 15 other students from Georgetown who came in as we were debating DACA and the Dream Act on the floor. I am sure they wanted to hear my speech on the floor but, just to make sure, we bought a dozen pizzas and the crew seemed to be pretty happy with that decision. It was an impressive group of students. Every one of them was a DACA recipient.

These young people have so much potential, but they are worried. They don't know what their future will be

with the decision made last week by the Trump administration to repeal DACA. Congress hasn't acted to pass the Dream Act, and we should.

As for Cristina Velasquez, she will graduate from Georgetown in December. She has been accepted into Teach for America. Most of us know that organization well, but for the record, it is a national nonprofit organization that places the most talented recent college graduates in challenging school districts in urban and rural areas where they have a shortage of teachers. Teach for America has 190 teachers working in these challenging districts who are currently DACA Dreamers. They are teaching kids all across America.

What does it say about us? What does it say to their students if these Teach for America Dreamers are invited to leave the country? That is exactly what Mr. Steve Bannon said on 60 Minutes on Sunday when he came out against our efforts to pass the Dream Act. He wants Cristina Velasquez gone. He thinks America is a better place if she is gone. I think he is wrong, and I think most reasonable people would agree.

Cristina is going to start the program, Teach for America, next summer and teach next fall, but without DACA or the Dream Act, Cristina and 190 other Teach for America teachers will be forced to drop out and leave their students behind.

Instead, many would have them deported back to countries they have never known, saying they are not part of the United States and they don't have anything to offer us. Will America be a stronger country if we deport Cristina or if she stays here to teach children in challenging districts? I think the answer is clear to any reasonable person.

When we introduced the Dream Act, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I—a Republican of South Carolina and a Democrat of Illinois—cosponsored the measure. We gave a press conference. Senator GRAHAM said: The moment of reckoning is coming. Well, that moment has arrived.

Republican leaders in Congress need to help us to pass the Dream Act once and for all and make it the law of the land. We need to bear responsibility for these hundreds of thousands who can make America a better country. They show with their lives that the promise of America is still very much alive.

As for this Senator, I have been at this for a long time. I am going to see it to the finish line. I still have that dream of the day when President Trump signs the Dream Act into law in the Oval Office. It will be a great day, particularly for this country to recognize that these young people offer special talents and a special commitment to the future of America, which we desperately need.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THANKING THE SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, once again I want to thank my colleague from Illinois for both his passion and his intelligence in terms of his approach to the Dream Act. We are getting closer to getting this done. It is hardly done yet, but without the Senator from Illinois, we would not be as close to "as close," so to speak, as we are today.

HURRICANE IRMA

Now, Mr. President, I want to first start off by saying that I hope that everyone in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina is staying safe as Hurricane Irma continues up the coast. Reports indicate that as many as 9 million Floridians have gone without power during the storm. Large parts of Miami and Jacksonville are under water. The Florida Keys have taken a particular beating. I saw the pictures on TV this morning.

As with Hurricane Harvey, the road to recovery will be long. As I said yesterday, I am ready to work with the administration and my Republican colleagues, when the time comes, to pass an aid package for the States dealing with Hurricane Irma.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. President, as discussions continue on NDAA, I would highlight a few amendments that are important to the Democratic side. We will be offering two amendments as part of our Better Deal agenda, including a "Buy American" provision and an amendment that would drastically cut down on outsourcing.

For too long, loopholes in our "Buy American" rules have allowed Federal agencies to waive "Buy American" requirements and skirt the spirit of the law. A single loophole—the overseas exemption, which allows a Federal agency to waive "Buy American" rules if the product is intended for use overseas—accounts for 65 percent of the exemptions that the Department of Defense issues in a given year.

Senator BALDWIN has an amendment that would eliminate these loopholes and ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent by Federal agencies to purchase products that are made here in the United States.

My friend Senator STABENOW has been a leading voice on this issue as well. She has an amendment that would also roll back the overseas exemption by requiring the DOD to identify and give consideration to domestically sourced items before soliciting any offers for anything that is not "Buy American" compliant.

Right now, there are also several American companies with records of outsourcing American jobs that are receiving defense contracts, and companies receive a tax credit for outsourcing expenses rather than incentives to

bring jobs back to the United States. We should put a stop to both, and Senator DONNELLY's amendment will do that. His amendment will give a tax credit of up to 20 percent for expenses that companies incur to bring jobs back to our shores.

Another critical amendment is a bipartisan amendment offered by Senators GRAHAM and KLOBUCHAR on the issue of election security. The consensus of 17 U.S. intelligence agencies was that Russia, a foreign adversary, interfered in our elections. Make no mistake—their success in 2016 will encourage them to try again. We have State elections in a couple of months, and the 2018 election is a little more than a year away. We must improve our defenses now to ensure that we are prepared. The Graham-Klobuchar amendment would greatly strengthen our defenses, helping to prepare States for the inevitable cyber attacks that threaten the integrity of our elections. We should pass it as part of the NDAA.

As Chairman MCCAIN and Ranking Member REED continue discussions on this bill—and I know their relationship is a good and strong one—I hope they strongly consider the inclusion of these three critical amendments.

ELECTION INTEGRITY COMMISSION

Mr. President, speaking of elections, a word on President Trump's Election Integrity Commission, which is meeting with the public for the first time today in New Hampshire. I have three points.

First, I would like to dispel the idea that this Commission has anything to do with election integrity. It was borne out of the President's baseless claim that 3 to 5 million people voted illegally in the 2016 elections. That is just not true. The Commission will never find evidence to support that claim.

Second, the public officials on this Commission must stop making similarly outrageous claims about voter fraud in elections. Recently, the Commission's Vice Chair, Kris Kobach, claimed that the New Hampshire Senate election could have been swung by illegal votes because they found a number of voters who had out-of-State licenses. Of course, there are several reasonable, legal, legitimate reasons as to why someone would vote in a State while having a license from a different State. Most likely, if you live at a college in New Hampshire but come from out of State, your car has an out-of-State license plate. By State law, if you are registered at a New Hampshire college, it is perfectly legal to vote there.

We all know that the States set these laws. In fact, when the Washington Post tried to identify some of these voters, the first four they randomly called were all college students who lived in New Hampshire but who went to school elsewhere.

Yet this Commission and, I would say, particularly its Vice Chair, Mr. Kobach, are so eager to prove their point—which is virtually unprovable—

that there is a huge amount of voter fraud that they come up with these baseless claims and then have to back off. Throwing these kinds of deeply misleading, bogus claims around about stolen elections and massive voter fraud without there being any actual evidence is extremely irresponsible and damaging to our democracy. They are so eager to prove their point about voter fraud, which is demonstrably false, that they are resorting to these crazy claims, discrediting their Commission and discrediting themselves.

Lastly, a broader point. The Election Integrity Commission is a punishment in search of a transgression that never happened, which shows that it likely has an ulterior motive.

Voter fraud is extremely rare. A comprehensive study by the Washington Post in 2014 concluded that out of over 1 billion ballots cast between 2000 and 2014, there were only 31 credible instances of voter fraud, and even some of those were debatable, according to the study. The Brennan Center for Justice concluded that an American has a better chance of being struck by lightning than impersonating another voter at the polls.

So why the need for a Presidential advisory commission? Because the real target of the Election Integrity Commission is not voter fraud but voter suppression, especially the suppression of African-American voters, poor voters, elderly voters, and Latino voters. Just like the campaigns for outrageous voter ID laws in State after State—many have been thrown out by the courts for being blatantly discriminatory—the Election Integrity Commission seems focused on throwing up barriers to voting through intimidation, misleading claims, and controversial tactics, like the widespread collection of sensitive, personal voter information.

I think what this Commission is trying to do flies in the face of what the country is all about. We want everyone to vote. We do not want to scare people, intimidate people, or make it harder for people to vote. If there were overwhelming evidence of fraud, obviously we would need to do something, but there is not. As I said, it is a solution—a nasty solution—in search of a problem. The Election Integrity Commission ought to be disbanded, and we will be looking for ways to do that legislatively.

The real threat to election integrity comes not from voter fraud but from foreign meddling and cyber attacks. We should pass the Graham-Klobuchar amendment rather than continue with the nonsense of this Commission.

Moreover, with voter participation rates being so low, we should be spending our time and energy encouraging more Americans to exercise their fundamental right to vote rather than wasting taxpayer dollars for a commission to solve a problem that does not exist.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CROHN'S & COLITIS FOUNDATION

Mr. President, before I yield the floor, today is the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, which does great work in my State in combating a very debilitating type of disease. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the accomplishments of the foundation and encouraging more research, better access to care, and improved treatments for patients with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

The New York-based Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, along with its partnering chapters across the country, is the largest national voluntary health group seeking the cure for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. It also works to improve the quality of life of children and adults affected by these diseases.

One in every 200 Americans struggles with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, collectively known as inflammatory bowel diseases, IBD. Although no cause has been identified for Crohn's disease, recent research suggests hereditary, genetics, and/or environmental factors contribute to the development of the disease. Further complicating matters, ulcerative colitis is the result of an abnormal response by the body's immune system.

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation sponsors basic and clinical research of the highest quality and offers a wide range of educational programs and supportive services for patients and healthcare professionals. In 2015, IBD Plexus was launched. IBD Plexus is a groundbreaking initiative that provides the infrastructure and capacities to facilitate and accelerate research into the causes and treatments of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

Federal agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health through the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control and Prevention, and the Department of Defense each support meaningful research and public health activities on Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Furthermore, the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services both play a significant role in approving new treatments and facilitating health care financing policies that impact patients with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

I deeply appreciate the work of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation and its longstanding dedication to the patients it represents. They have endeavored to improve the quality of life of so many Americans, and the U.S. Senate recognizes the foundation's 50th anniversary.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HURRICANES HARVEY AND IRMA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, let me say that my heart goes out to the people of America who are, right now, dealing with Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and their aftermaths.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE GLEASON AND DONNA BRITT

Mr. President, ALS, which I think most of us refer to as Lou Gehrig's disease, has hit us hard in Louisiana. It has hit our world hard, but it has hit especially hard in my State.

A number of my colleagues and a number of Americans, I hope, were watching the night the New Orleans Saints returned to the field after our State was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. That night in the Superdome, a young man named Steve Gleason became a legend. I know it was just a football game, but he blocked a punt deep in the territory of the Saints' opponent, the Atlanta Falcons, for a touchdown. It was more than just a touchdown; it was a declaration that Louisiana was going to come back, that our spirit was not broken.

Today, Steve Gleason is battling ALS. The medical term for ALS is "amyotrophic lateral sclerosis." We call it, as I said, Lou Gehrig's disease. It is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that destroys nerve cells in the brain and in the spinal cord. Regrettably, there is no cure. Steve, however, is determined to thrive and help others who have ALS.

Within the past few weeks, we have also learned that another Louisianan has ALS—well-known Baton Rouge television news anchor Donna Britt. I will tell you, like Steve, Donna is showing true grit in the face of this horrible disease. Most of us would probably curl into a fetal position and cry if we were told we had a progressive neurodegenerative disease that is almost always fatal—but not Steve and certainly not Ms. Donna Britt. Their valor and their courage is inspirational to me and, I think, to all Louisianans. As Donna herself put it, she is going to continue living as a living person and not as a dying person.

There is a famous line in a famous movie in which the main character says: I have a choice here—it is time to get busy living or get busy dying. Donna has chosen to get busy living. She is going to keep going to work, and she is going to keep caring for her family. Donna is educating herself about ALS. She has ordered a state-of-the-art wheelchair with Bluetooth technology, and she is adding words to a voice bank for when she can no longer speak because of this horrible disease. Donna Britt—I am not surprised—is determined to meet every challenge.

Let me say it again. This is pure valor. It is the type of courage in the face of adversity that inspires us all. It

is also Donna. I do not know how to put that any other way. That is Donna Britt. Donna is a person who plays the oboe and who has survived breast cancer. She donates books to school libraries, and for charity she sings outside the Walmart during the holidays. She travels the world, and she delivers the news. She is a voice of comfort to all of those in her television media market, and she loves her family. She and her husband Mark Ballard have a son and a daughter. Her daughter Annie is a scientist working in DNA research, and their son Louie is a bright, young student in high school.

Donna has delivered the news in the Baton Rouge metropolitan area for 36 years. She spent her entire career, which is very unusual, at one television station—WAFB in Baton Rouge, which Donna has helped to make a powerhouse in Louisiana media. Donna has done her job so extraordinarily well that she has become a role model for young journalists—all journalists but particularly female journalists. I can tell my colleagues that folks in Baton Rouge feel Donna Britt is a part of their family. They trust her. That is because she is impartial, she is objective, and she is insightful. Since 1981, she has been on the air with the people of the Baton Rouge metropolitan area through storms, through inaugurations, through just about every major news event, good times and bad, that one can imagine. Donna also takes our people into the community and introduces them to interesting people.

A few months ago, Donna realized her health wasn't what it should be. There is no definitive test for ALS, as perhaps my colleagues know. Basically, the doctors have to rule everything else out before determining that one has ALS. As she struggled to figure out why she was losing the use of her fingers and her legs, Donna didn't keep her viewers in the dark. She brought them along for the journey in frank, candid Facebook videos. Along the way, she educated them—ever the journalist—on what it is like to have a degenerative disease.

At a family reunion this summer, Donna all of a sudden could not stand any longer. Now, that is a problem when you stand behind a desk to deliver the news—not for Donna. It was just another challenge to conquer. She promptly ordered a wheelchair that would adapt to her new reality.

Now Donna Britt is working with Louisiana State University to prepare for the day when her respiratory and diaphragm muscles are too weak for her to vocalize what she is thinking. With LSU's help, she is putting words into a voice bank for the future. Once again, it is just another challenge for Donna Britt to conquer.

I am very proud of Steve Gleason, and I am also very proud of Donna Britt. As angry as I am that anyone has to live with this dreadful disease ALS, I am proud they are inspiring an army of ALS sufferers by meeting

every challenge and battling to thrive. I am proud that Steve and Donna are inspiring all of us with their valor and their courage.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:05 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kevin Allen Hassett, of Massachusetts, to be Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 20 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, on the campaign trail, Donald Trump promised working families that he would subject every proposal he saw in the White House to a simple test: "Does it create more jobs and better wages for Americans?" He claimed he wasn't "going to let Wall Street get away with murder," and he said he was going to "drain the swamp."

Such great talk—and then he got to Washington. His first order of business was to put together a team of people who had spent decades as executives at big banks and large corporations—people who are determined to tilt the playing field in favor of Wall Street and against working families. You don't need to look very far to see them. His most senior economic advisers—Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn, and the senior counselor for economic initiatives, Dina Powell—together, those three have spent nearly a half a century combined working for Goldman Sachs. When it comes to our economy, this isn't the Trump administration; this is the Goldman Sachs administration.